



An Open Letter to Coastal Cup Players, Parents and Coaches

Coastal Cup tournaments are geared toward the Club level travel team. What is a Club level team? Some characteristics of a Club level team include (this is not all inclusive and a Club level team does not have to have all of these characteristics to be considered a Club level team):

- A roster of players that remains consistent from tournament to tournament
- Players on a club team have “graduated” from the local house league program
- Club teams have regular practices that all members of the team attend
- Players on a club team are typically all from the same geographic location
- Club teams have tryouts

This is opposed to an Elite level team that has the following characteristics (this is not all inclusive and an Elite level team does not have to have all of these characteristics to be considered an Elite level team):

- The roster of players changes frequently depending on who is available to play
- Players on the roster may have never played in a house league at the rink where the Elite team calls home
- Elite teams are made up of kids who are “recruited” from other teams, house leagues or hockey programs
- Elite teams are often “assembled” – no tryouts are held, practices are rare or lightly attended
- Elite teams are made up of kids from all over the region, whether that be a multi-state area, a state area or even a large city
- Elite teams are often combined teams – you bring your best four, I’ll bring my best four and we’ll make a great team

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the Elite-level travel teams. They offer the very top players the opportunity to play at the very top levels. However, Coastal Cup is not geared towards Elite level teams. We never have been, never will be and have never tried to pretend otherwise.

Coastal Cup is for the Club-level travel team. Other tournament series don’t really care where you get your players from – we do.

Coastal Cup has always had some rules that try to discourage “free agents,” “recruiting” and “team building” in our youth divisions (see the Rules section at www.coastalcup.com). Sometimes it seems that the more rules there are, the more loopholes there are. We cannot police everything – sometimes things are gray and we always try to give the **kids** the benefit of the doubt. More rules will only create more ways to subvert them.

The purpose of this open letter then is to serve notice to everyone about the philosophy of Coastal Cup. **We are appealing to you as players, parents and coaches to adhere to the *spirit of the law* rather than just the letter of the law.** For example, a kid moves from one town to another and now wants to play on the local team. Its not

practical for his parents to drive him 60 miles to practice twice a week. That change of teams fits within the spirit of the law. No one is trying to get an advantage, no one has tried to recruit that kid, he just moved and wants to play. On the other hand, if a kid who lives in Pleasantville, which already has a travel team, drives 60 miles to play on the Hockeyboro team, I'm going to question whether or not that meets the spirit of the law. As the old saying goes, "If it walks like a duck, smells like a duck and talks like a duck.... It must be a duck."

Again, I am not going to get into laying down a whole bunch of new rules. I am also not going to do a background check on every kid concerning what house league he plays for, where he lives, how often he goes to practice, etc. **I am relying on the integrity of the coaches and parents.** If you want to assemble an Elite team for a TORHS, ECHO, or NARCh tournament, feel free. They don't bill themselves as geared towards Club-level teams and they don't care where you get your players from. Just please don't bring an Elite team to a Coastal Cup tournament – its not what we're about.

Beginning with the 2003-2004 season, we created a player profile form. This form will serve as a "common sense checker" to gauge whether or not a team is considered elite. Each player who plays in a Coastal Cup tournament must complete this form.

If you have any questions whatsoever about what this means to you, your team, your players, etc. please do not hesitate to call me. **Please don't show up at a tournament with a questionable player or team without having discussed it with me in advance.** Most of you know me and know that I am reasonable guy. If your request is reasonable and it meets the spirit of the law, you'll have no problem. But we need to work that out well before the tournament. Please don't put me on the spot 10 minutes before your game is supposed to start. I will not hesitate to prevent a player or team from playing if I feel that they are not meeting the spirit of the Coastal Cup philosophy. I will then send that kid and his parents to you to explain why this wasn't worked out several days before the tournament started.

Thank you for your support of Coastal Cup. We have been around since 1996 and we are one of the oldest inline hockey tournament series in the nation. As the sport continues to mature, we want to ensure that we stay true to our original mission – providing club-level teams an opportunity to develop, play and have fun.

Jake Plancon
Coastal Cup Director
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